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SECRET

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Central Intelligence Bulletin

CONTENTS

Vietnam: Situation report. (Page 1)

Guatemala: The opposition has begun to prepare
for the presidential elections in 1970. (Page 3)

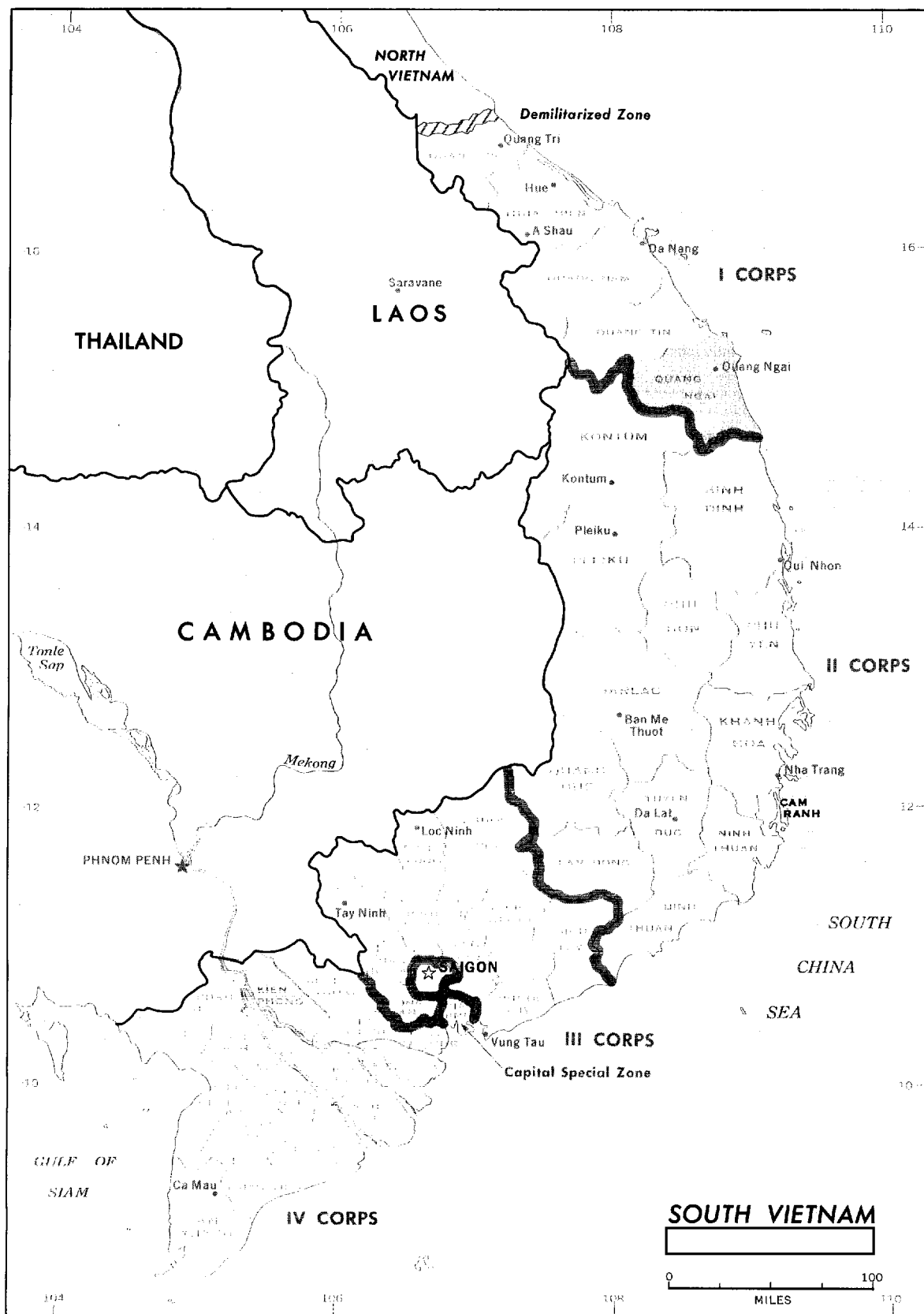
Czechoslovakia: Smrkovsky demotion (Page 4)

Lebanon: Cabinet resignation (Page 4)

Chile: Public employees' strike (Page 4)

SECRET

SECRET



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SECRET

25X1

SECRET

[Vietnam: Except for sharp fighting at allied initiative southwest of Saigon in Kien Phong Province, little military action of significance was reported in South Vietnam on 6-7 January.

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[] indicate that the Viet Cong are advancing from a basically village-oriented drive to establish liberation committees to one emphasizing the development of similar structures at the district and province levels.

25X1

A Liberation Radio broadcast on 21 December announced the formation of a province-level liberation committee in Quang Ngai. This marks the tenth province in which the enemy claims to have established a so-called "revolutionary administration." The broadcast also announced the abolition of the "Quang Ngai puppet administration from provincial to prefectural and village levels." The Communists declared that Saigon's provincial administration is now formally considered "illegal." This latter claim is a new development in the enemy's attempt to "legitimize" its local administration.

The broadcast stopped short of claiming legal governmental status for the liberation committee but did declare that "the Quang Ngai...People's Revolutionary Committee from now on will assume the task of organizing and leading the people."

The broadcast claimed that 134 villages in 12 districts with a total population of over 415,000 have been "liberated" and have taken part in the establishment of the new administration. According to the hamlet evaluation system, over 500,000 people in Quang Ngai live in either relatively secure or contested hamlets and only about 160,000 are subject to complete Viet Cong control.]

(continued)

8 Jan 69

Central Intelligence Bulletin

1

SECRET

SECRET

25X1 [In the rest of the country a considerable fall off in reporting of new village committees was noted in December. [redacted] indicate that this part of the campaign is to be completed this month.

A Hanoi broadcast on 16 December claimed that "elections have been held to set up people's revolutionary power in almost all the 44 provinces of South Vietnam," implying that the village-level organization is nearing completion. If this is the case, public claims of district and provincial administrations can probably be expected to proliferate in the near future. [redacted] (Map)]

25X1

8 Jan 69

Central Intelligence Bulletin

2

SECRET

Guatemala: After many months of political inactivity, the opposition has begun preparing for the presidential elections in 1970.

The leftist-oriented Christian Democrats have named their slate, and Ambassador to Nicaragua Colonel Carlos Arana expects to be named soon as standard bearer of the rightist National Liberation Movement.

Arana recently told the US ambassador to Nicaragua that he expects a coalition of "all the forces to the right" to be announced soon, and that if this happens he will resign his post at the end of this month and return to Guatemala to prepare for his campaign.

Prior to March 1968, Arana was commander of the powerful army brigade in the guerrilla-infested northeastern Department of Zacapa. He is a forceful leader and was largely responsible for the success of the army's counterinsurgency campaign of late 1966 and 1967.

25X1

SECRET

NOTES

25X1 [Czechoslovakia: The party presidium has recommended that National Assembly President Smrkovsky step down to the newly created post of first vice president of parliament. The presidium is probably hoping that this appointment will be considered only a slight change in Smrkovsky's political standing and ease tensions that have centered on the future status of the top leadership's only remaining progressive. Deputy Premier Peter Colotka, a Slovak moderate and an expert in legal and constitutional affairs, has been nominated by the presidium to assume the post of president when a new federal parliament is assembled.

[REDACTED]

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Lebanon: Political leaders are going through the usual political maneuvers required in times of crisis to damp growing public criticism. Prime Minister Yafi has orally offered his cabinet's resignation in the aftermath of the Israeli attack on Beirut airport. Squabbling in the cabinet over who was responsible for the airport debacle apparently has brought the cabinet's work to a standstill. The formation of a national coalition cabinet representing all political parties is likely; this move would serve to spread the blame should the Israelis strike Lebanon again.

[REDACTED]

25X1

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Chile: The Communist-dominated Chilean Workers Central has called a 48-hour strike of public employees on 8-9 January to demand higher cost-of-living wage increases. This strike will be the first major one since Christian Democratic and Radical labor unions were incorporated into the Workers Central in November. [Whatever the size of the turnout, the problem of wages for government employees is certain to be an issue in the campaign for the congressional elections in March.]

[REDACTED]

25X1

8 Jan 69

Central Intelligence Bulletin

4

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